

## THE EARLY BIRD CATCHES THE WORM.

And once read this cute old saw,  
Then to himself he said,  
"I can catch that same old worm  
Pleasantly leave my bed."  
And so he did, but that old worm  
The same cute saw had read,  
Then sagely took his morning snooze,  
And bird sneaked home unfed.  
MORAL.  
The maxim lacks consistency  
Whichever way you squint,  
Is bad advice for "worm."  
—Boston Transcript.

## A WILD RIDE.

It's now scarcely 12 months ago, and Jack Coleman as a party of us drew round our campfire, "that I was piloting a small party of Uncle Sam's men up to one of the new forts on the upper prairie—I believe they called it Fort Belknap or some such name. The sojourn was a precious set of greenhorns—new recruits, I should think.  
"Well, these fellows were under the command of a white skinned, girlish looking young chap, fresh from West Point. But young and green as he was, the lieutenant was a gentleman and at heart as good a fellow as ever lived.  
"The party was mounted on such nags as the quartermaster could purchase for them in a hurry, for though they were infantry the journey before them was so long to be undertaken afoot over the grassy prairie.  
"Scarcely any of the men had ever before thrown leg over horse, but the lieutenant knew something about riding. I believe he said he had been learned where he learned sojering, and after a few days could sit his saddle and bear the fatigue as well as any old Indian.  
"I'd been down to San Antonio about three weeks, and when the quartermaster engaged me to pilot the sojers, strawberry had had the quiet range of the prairie all that time, and when we took the trail he was in prime order.  
"The more I got acquainted with the lieutenant the better I liked him. But the fellows he had along with him were of no account, and I knew if the Kiowas or Kiowas should cross our trail they couldn't be depended on.  
"We journeyed with the Brazos on our left and in a northwest direction, after about a week or so, we reached the headwaters of the Leon river, and as we'd discovered no signs of Indians I was glad to think we'd have no occasion to try the spunk of our greenhorns in a fight.  
"We had reached the foot of the Black Hills, where the country is badly cut up with deep barrancas, crossing each other in every direction, and having had a hard day's travel I proposed an early camp. While looking for a suitable spot I discovered fresh horse tracks and knew that a large party of Indians were in the vicinity. I informed the lieutenant of my discovery and advised him to secrete his men in some possible place for a night, and make no noise.  
"I was in no mood for dancing, but he could allege the latest dance in the latest dance, and it was not long before I knew that the Indians had discovered us, for we could hear them calling to each other in the bottom of one of the deep gullies, and presently a score or two showed their heads above the edge of the bank, and letting fly a volley dodged out of sight again.  
"I was for getting out of the prairie as soon as possible and reaching a spot among the rocks at the commencement of the rising ground, where we could receive them at a better advantage, but the lieutenant was so greedy for a fight that he wouldn't listen to me a moment and gave orders for his men to dismount and form in regular line and await the attack.  
"But scarcely had some of them obeyed the order than we heard a yell, and the next moment the prairie was covered with a host of mounted Kiowas that came pouring out of a barranca and charged right down upon us. The sojers who had not obeyed the order, trusting more to their horses' heels than to their rifles, put spurs to their broken down nags and attempted to escape. But they might as well have essayed to fly from the swift tornado as to get beyond the reach of those wild riders. A part of the whooping savages made a dash for the cowardly fools and soon had their scalps, while the rest, charging past with a headlong gallop and lying over upon the farther side of the very little mustangs, sent a volley to our ranks. And now, taking my advice, the lieutenant ordered his fellows to dismount and in close order make an effort to gain the rocks. But two of the men were past mounting, and we had to leave them.  
"We had about half a mile to go to get among the nearest rocks, but to do so we had to run the gamut of the Indians, who kept up a hot discharge which made desperate work in our little ranks. We spurred through the savages, who attempted to cut in ahead of us, and with our sabers and revolvers kept the track clear till we had reached the rocks.  
"Having gained the spot, however, I found to our chagrin that our situation was but little improved, for the reckless and undisciplined men in their eagerness to escape had thrown away their muskets and were now, with the exception of their sabers, entirely unarmed. But the lieutenant and myself, besides our revolvers, had each a heavy revolver.  
"In the meantime our pack mules had fallen into the hands of the savages.  
"I reckoned we were within about 20 yds or so of the fort and proposed to the lieutenant that while he set his poor fellows to work gathering up the loose muskets and making a barricade I would endeavor to dash through the Indians and after reaching the post return as quickly as possible with a sufficient force to relieve him.  
"As this seemed to be the only feasible

plan, the lieutenant approved of it, and waiting only for the cover of the approaching night I was prepared to make the desperate attempt. I tightened Strawberry's saddle girth and during the short twilight led him carefully under cover of the scattered rocks and mesquite bushes to smooth ground, and after I had turned the projecting point of high rocks mounted, and with an encouraging hint from my heel gave him the rein.  
"But cautious as I had been, the wily Indians had been watching all my motions, and scarcely had I emerged upon level ground than, filling the air with derisive yells, a score or two of the painted rascals, mounted on their fleetest mustangs gave chase.  
"Yet I knew gallant little Strawberry could outrun any Indian nag I ever had a trial with, and without pushing him overboard I flew out over the prairie. The Indians on each flank of me continued to rise apparently from out the earth.  
"Scarcely had the brief twilight ended than the rounded disk of the full moon peered over the crest of the hills and streamed a silver flood of light over the wild scene.  
"But presently I had other objects to contemplate, for in the light of the rising orb I could perceive that I was approaching one of those deep, almost bottomless barrancas, while the Indians, yelling exultantly, gathered closer upon me.  
"I was fairly entrapped! Should I draw rein and turn upon my pursuers or sink my rowels into the flanks of my fearless little charger and seek death with him in the yawning chasm below?  
"I had but a breath to decide, and as I would at least thus save my scalp from my hated pursuers I resolved to brave the latter and closed my eyes and clinched my teeth for the awful leap.  
"Without swerving an inch or evincing the least fear the noble animal dashed on. I felt the yielding air rush with lightning speed past me, my breath was taken from me, and then, quicker than the flight of thought, I felt his fore feet strike upon the solid earth, then an instant's struggle with his hind feet, as if the ground was crumbling beneath them, and then—heaven be praised!—I saw that we were on the firm, level ground of the prairie, with the frightful ravine between us and our baffled pursuers.  
"We were safe, for not even the bravest of the Indians dared to make the desperate leap, and as the barranca doubtless extended for miles into the prairie further pursuit was out of the question.  
"In less than two hours I reached Fort Belknap, and before the light of the next morning broke over the green expanse a party of troopers had followed me to the spot where I had left the brave young officer and the remnant of his men.  
"But we had arrived too late. The spot was silent, and the ground so recently occupied by the Kiowas was vacant, while among stones of the demolished barranca were found only the scalps and mangled remains of my late companions.  
"That little Strawberry," concluded the guide as he threw aside his extinguished pipe and proceeded to move the animal to a fresh grazing spot, "is worth his weight in gold, and I reckon if any beast ever deserved kind treatment at his master's hands it's him."  
—New York News.

"Seven and Six."  
English newspapers in the days when advertisements were heavily taxed published the titles of books reviewed in their columns, but never the prices, because the excise office held that an annexed price was an advertisement and as such taxable. The custom continued for a long time after the tax on advertisements had been removed.  
The London newspapers also made a distinction between a simple notice of a death, for which they charged 5 shillings, and a brief obituary, for which they demanded seven and sixpence.  
One day Dr. Thomas Hume, a grave, satirical London doctor, called at the office of a morning journal and silently placed upon the counter the announcement of the death of a friend, together with 5 shillings. The clerk glanced at the paper, tossed it one side and said gruffly, "Seven and six!"  
"I have frequently," answered Hume, "had occasion to publish these simple notices, and I have never before been charged more than 5 shillings."  
"Simple!" repeated the clerk without looking up. "There's an added line, 'universally beloved and deeply regretted,' isn't there? Seven and six."  
Hume produced the additional half crown and laid it deliberately by the others, observing in his most solemn tone, "Congratulate yourself, sir, that this is an expense which your executors will never be put to."—Youth's Companion.  
A Chinese Superstition.  
Chinese junks and boats have eyes carved or painted on the bows, which are usually supposed to be a fierce fanciful form of ornamentation. But they have a real meaning, as a recent traveler found. In going up one of the rivers from Ningpo he was startled one day by seeing a boatman seize his broad hat and clap it over one of the "eyes" of the boat, while other boats on the stream were similarly blinded. Looking about for an explanation, he saw a dead body floating past, and he was told by the boatman that if the boat had been allowed to "see" it some disaster would surely have happened either to passengers or crew before the voyage was ended.—Family Magazine.  
A Woman With Nerves.  
Let no envious man ever say again that feminine "nerves" will interfere with feminine success in business. At the recent decapitation of the Anarchist Henry in Paris one of the most interested spectators was Mme. Yver, the representative of a French paper. She is said to have written "calmly yet busily" throughout the scene.

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